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Contact: Jennifer O'Shea, 202-224-6830

BURNS ANNOUNCES LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

WASHINGTON- U.S. Sen. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) today announced the passage of a bipartisan bill to renew and improve federal programs that provide assistance for career and technical training. Burns is a co-sponsor of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act, which would provide more coordination and flexibility to ensure students are better prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce. Burns recently sent a letter to Budget Committee Chairman Gregg to express his support for several education programs, which include vocational programs, that had been cut in the president's FY06 budget: "I will continue conversations with my Senate colleagues regarding the importance of all of these education programs, and work to restore funding as the budget process moves forward in Congress." The Senate agreed to the Perkins legislation last night in a vote of 99-0.

"As our world grows, we must continue to make sure our students are prepared for what's ahead of them," said Burns. "It's unrealistic to view our education system as a totally separate entity from our workforce when one has a direct impact on the other, and we must make sure that the information being taught in our schools takes this into account. I am proud to be co-sponsor of this bill that will continue to improve our education systems and better prepare our youth for their future."

In 1998, a bill to renew the programs was passed, which restructured the formula for distributing federal funds and established performance standards and corresponding sanctions and incentives for states to meet those standards. The current bill requires a better integration of academic, career and technical curricula in order to strengthen coordination between high school and postsecondary institutions.

Burns added: "I was involved in a 4-H club as a youngster, and this type of hands-on learning was critical to my education. I understand how successful this program is in Montana, and I will continue to support Carl Perkins and make sure it has the funding it needs to flourish."

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http://burns.senate.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=1284